



EDEN

on contemporary
dawah

shaykh muhammad al-abdah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



On Contemporary Da‘wah

Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Abdah

Translated by
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Publisher's note

PRAISE BE TO ALLAH, whose incomparable wisdom insightful minds are compelled to recognise and whose subtle arguments triumph in disputes created by discursive minds. And may He, to whom praise is forever due, bless the most perfect one in His creation Muḥammad ﷺ, and his family, and may He grant them abundant peace.

In these days when books roll off the presses in greater numbers than ever before, every author and publisher owes it to himself and his readers to justify the addition of another title before a sophisticated public. The reasons that prompted us to undertake such a task are many. Firstly and most crucially, it is our duty as Muslim to be Callers to Islam - participating fully in the process of Da'wah in all of its forms. Secondly, it is the small number of the ahl al-Sunnah's literature in English which is characterised by depth of analysis, relevance of examples and practicality of solutions. Moreover, there are few new books that deal frankly with matters related to the process of Da'wah: goals and means, short and long term objectives, the prerequisites of a Caller, subtle and plain matters, the crucial issues of our day, understanding the conflict between truth and falsehood, all are areas that require further illumination, and by the will of Allah this as the first book and forthcoming ones will be a contribution in bridging this gap and settling the overturned balance.

A continuous work of this magnitude is never achieved by one man. There are many brothers who contributed by various means to this project, and more specifically the dozen or so who were directly responsible for producing this and other books. Many will remain as unknown soldiers who desire to record their fine deed solely with Allah. We ask Almighty Allah ﷻ to accept all of these efforts, and to guide us all to what is best.

Eden Books.

The author

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The Shaykh is well known for his depth of analysis and frankness of speech, and the accurate correlation of contemporary affairs in their historical context. Apart from his numerous articles in different magazines, he has written the following books: *The Movement of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, the revolt of Muḥammad bin ʿAbd Allah bin Ḥasan bin ʿAlī bin Abī Ṭalīb against al-Manṣūr*, translated into Persian. *Will history repeat itself? An introduction into the causes of Muslims' divisions. Al-Muḥṣilab. Al-Ṣūfiyyah. Islamic extremism or European Xenophobia. Thoughts on Daʿwah*, and most recently *The Road to Madīnah*. He also contributed introductions for *ibn Taymiyyah's letters from prison* and Dr Amīn al-Maṣrī's *Responsibility*.

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Introduction

PRAISE BE TO ALLAH, the Lord of the Worlds, and may the peace and blessing be upon our master Muḥammad who proclaimed the message, delivered the trust and instructed the Ummah, and upon his kin and companions.

The Call to the way of Allah, or Daʿwah, is one of the noblest actions a Muslim does when desiring the reward of Allah. It was related in a ḥadīth: "If Allah is to guide a man through you, then this is better than owning the red camels."¹ Such a call was the occupation of the Prophets and Messengers, and those following their example amongst scholars and reformers. Indeed this great task's noteworthiness is known only to those whose hearts are devoted to it, becoming thereby the pivot of their lives, engrossing them in thinking about it day and night in the search for a window of opportunity or an escape from a present constraint.

And if Daʿwah was stressed upon in every age, then this present one is in an ever more acute need of it. This is due to the profusion of vice and peoples' increasing distance from their Lord's religion. Yet the Callers ought to seek methodological validity and the straightness of way, and to study the recent past and live the expected future, and to observe the performance of Daʿwah in its strong periods and the weak ones, so as to renew methods and ways.

The time span between writing the first of the following articles and the last is not short. Yet the situation of the Muslims is still halfway between optimism and despair, for the reawakening is slow and the constraints are many.

Furthermore, the ways of remedy are many and occasionally opposed, and the issues of rebirth and revival need more effort than what has previously been envisaged.

The following articles speak about some concerns of Islamic work from within, for it was and still is the prime concern. If the internal building was strong and enduring, then all of the challenges and pressures will wither away.

The companions were very aware of the importance of the internal front. It was reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī from the authority of ‘Umar bin al-Khatāb ؓ that he said: “I had a friend from amongst the Ansār who when I was absent from the company of the Messenger ﷺ, reported to me the news thereof, and I did the same to him. Once, news reached us that a leader of the Ghassan kingdom was intending to raid us, and we became anxious as a result. During this time, my Ansāri friend came to my door knocking and shouting: “Open...open”, so I exclaimed: “Is it the Ghassani?” “No” he said, “Worse, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has withdrawn from his wives.” Hence the Ansāri companion regards an incident that took place inside the houses of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as more significant and more critical than the possibility of the Ghassani raid on Madīnah. And such -through the great lie of Ifk- was the evil plan of the chief of the hypocrites ‘Abd Allah bin Ubay to break the internal front and to destroy the enduring trust between the leader and his soldiers.

I am full of hope that the thoughts in these articles will be of benefit to those concerned with Islamic work, and be of use in filling certain gaps or be a warning about important issues. And Allah alone will uphold his Call, and show His Magnificence, and He alone we seek, for He is the best Helper.

1 The Messenger was indicating the enormity of this act and likened it to the ownership of the most prized type of camel.

Concern with Da'wah

ARE WE REALLY concerned about Da'wah and its success and whether it is strong and assertive? Or is there a parallel concern that struggles and competes with the former in the shape of our own future? The future of our careers, children, the guaranteeing of a comfortable house, a car and a suitable country of residence?

Our state of affairs shows this competition very evidently. Apart from a minority, Da'wah does not occupy the inner thoughts of Muslims, or engage them in their days and nights with questions such as: what is the path to more success, how can the Call move forward, and what are the reasons of failure, backwardness, and weakness?

The Callers to Islam know that the unity of methodology and action and the concentration of productive energies are fundamental to the strength of the Da'wah; so why not attempt it? Knowing that the Islamic Da'wah today has not the followed message, and neither does it have an honoured status, nor even a committee of scholars who are heard and trusted, why do they not endeavour towards such goals?

What is so surprising is the zeal with which the people of innovations and the Callers to falsehood conduct their drive for success. They are to be seen across the length and breadth of the world calling people to their innovated principles. One of their callers declared, "If this matter (meaning his Call) becomes dominant for just one whole day, and this is my wish, then I will die satisfied." I also remember from my readings that the leader of the Mu'tizilī sect Wāṣil

bin 'Atā' decided to send one of his close followers as a Caller to a distant town, however this follower was also a successful businessman and tried with his leader to send someone else in return for a large amount of money. The leader Wāṣil refused the pleas and insisted on his close follower -the businessman- going, and the latter obeyed!

Today, one can see how only a minority of Muslim doctors would be willing to serve in remote areas-such as in the depths of Africa or Asia, practising their trade and calling those around them to Islam. Worst still, one observes how graduates of the Islamic universities prefer to work in cities-even at a very low level- rather than opting to go to remote areas whose inhabitants desperately need people of their calibre due to the prevalent ignorance of or complete deviation from Islam. The problem lies in people's preference for the more comfortable life of the city, and capital cities in particular, begging the question...who shall service the needs, clinical and spiritual of the impoverished regions? This takes us back to the main question: Are we really concerned about Da'wah and its success?

Survival mentality

THERE IS NO doubt that the biggest group inside the Islamic societies today is the one described by Ibn al-Qayyim as *ashāb al-‘aql al-mā‘īshī* or ‘the people of survival mentality’. They are the ones constantly worried about raising their living standards, or guarding existing ones. They are seen thinking day and night in these matters, and they are seen day and night exhausting themselves in working towards matching the living standards of their friends and neighbours. As a result their talk is always regarding the house, the clothes, the car, the furniture and the wage.

This strata of society is large. They became content with life, but as they possess no mission became inconsequential in shaping society. Can the Callers of Islam gradually motivate them to become people of principle, mission and adherence? This transition will not be too difficult for some, and can take place in their gatherings if they hear powerful reminders and effective speech. The content of such speech is the elaboration on Allah’s majesty and greatness in His decrees and creations, His signs in the humans and horizons. Also, the aḥādīth on the Last Day, the demise of transgressing nations and individuals, present and past, and the illustration of Islam’s splendour.

It is paramount for Da‘wah that those large sections of society enter it so it can substantiate itself, and be a force on the ground. It is important for the hitherto foes or neglectful people to come in on the side of the Islamic Call, for they might become stronger and more enthusiastic in try-

ing to compensate what they had lost or neglected. There are of course many other ways to attract such people or just some of them, yet we are neglectful in reviving the methods of Da'wah, and in doing our utmost to be connected with the masses of the Ummah and its Call to adhere to Allah's way.

When the scholar of the Ummah 'Abd Allah bin 'Abbās ؓ was heard interpreting the Surah al-Baqrah in Mina during Hajj, it was said that had the Jews and Christians heard him, they would have embraced Islam. This is proof that knowledge of Allah's book and referring to it in the right context will affect the most hardened of people, especially if that speech was uttered from a person whose heart is sincerely concerned with the affairs of Muslims.

Clarity of goals

IF YOU WISH for your Da'wah to be strong and effective in gathering people who will endorse and support it, then you should be clear in its proclamation and clear in showing its goals. You should specify the truth that you hold robustly and in a very clear way. On the other hand, devious and convoluted means will obscure the way, and might never lead to the desired objective. This means that individual Callers ought to fully comprehend their Da'wah, and the means by which to implement it and the purpose of so doing. The lack of such an understanding will inevitably lead to inefficient exegesis and the haphazard mix between its first and latter stages of Da'wah, leading to slips, stumbles and aimlessness.

The provisional goals were very clear in the Prophetic Sīrah. The Da'wah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was clear and focused from the beginning. It was the Calling of all mankind to the servanthood of Allah alone, and the abandonment of all that is worshipped beside Him in terms of idols, tyrants, passions and desires. The Messenger ﷺ then moved to the period of looking for a safe refuge for Da'wah and its people, to be the base for dominion on earth. By that time Allah had aided him through the people of Yathrib (later known as Madīnah) when they embraced Islam, and the Da'wah was focused towards constructing the state. After that, the state moved to the stage of defensive Jihad then to the stage of Jihad *in order that all worship be devoted to Allah alone.*¹ (Surah al-Baqarah:193)

This clarity and the insistence on it made many Arabs admire the Call and its prime Caller. This is due to the fact that insistence on truth and its defence will awaken people and make them wonder that had this Da'wah not been truthful, its adherents wouldn't defend it in such a way. Such insistence will be followed by victory, and this is another reason why people flocked to the Messenger ﷺ. The truthful Da'wah will be successful even if only during some stages or at certain times, *and Allah always prevails in whatever be His purpose.*^{II} (Surah Yūsuf: 21). As for its failure one time after another, then this is an indication that its individuals have not made the distinction between goals and means, and so hurried where patience is needed and stalled where they are obliged to hasten.

In this age, many non-Muslim leaders have declared clear goals, and used plain means, and acquired, as a result, much of what they had desired. One of those leaders said: "It is impossible for a group to carry on operating, and to encounter success unless it possesses firm ideas and beliefs, with a clear working plan." We also say that the Islamic work has no alternative but to adopt a plain working plan.

^I وَيَكُونُ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ

^{II} وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ

Only pronounce the truth

ALLAH THE EXALTED in might, has entrusted the scholars and the Caller to His chosen religion not to hide knowledge, but to explain it to the people, fearing none but Him. Indeed, the most evil amongst the people of the book (Jews and Christian) were their clergy for they hid the knowledge and exchanged the verses of Allah for personal gain. But the scholars of this favoured Muslim nation are its best individuals who were entrusted to proclaim Allah's word and were trustworthy in their proclamation. The examples in our history are many.

It was related in the biography of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal that when he was tried and ordered to agree to the false Mu'tazilī claims, Abū Ja'far al-Anbārī advised him, "You are a leader today, and the people will follow you. For by Allah, if you approve their opinion, a great number of people will follow you. And if you were to disagree from sanctioning it, a great number of people will also obey you. Whatever happens, if this man (referring to the Sultan) does not kill you, you will eventually die, for there is no escape from it. So fear Allah, and do not approve them." It was also reported that al-Mirwadhī said to Imām Aḥmad, "O teacher, Allah has said: *And do not kill yourselves.*"¹ (Surah al-Nisā':29) So Ahmad replied, "O Mirwadhī, go out and have a look." There, in a courtyard of Dār al-Khilāfah, he saw a number of people that only Allah knows their number with pads, pens and ink and when he inquired about what were they doing the reply came, "We are awaiting what Imām Aḥmad

will say so as to document it." Hearing this he went to the Imām who exclaimed, "O Mirwadhī, should I lead astray all of those?"

Indeed this distinguished Imam had intended to sacrifice himself in order not to pervert people's beliefs as he commanded a large following. Nowadays we observe some of the Callers who are followed, amid the loss of broad awareness and correct Ijtihād in the area of Da'wah, fall into the thing that the Imam managed to avoid. These errors are either committed by giving credit to those unworthy, or by encouraging unhealthy conditions wherein people full of hope follow them only to be disappointed.

If we as Muslims were instructed to tell the truth in our evaluation of individuals, and to be just even at times of rage and hatred, then we should for example call those who are valiant brave even if they are non-believers. This helps to clear the picture in the eyes of the people as we strive not to deceive them in any matter.

It is obvious that many a Caller was not forced to give credit to those unworthy, thereby upsetting the Islamic scales of evaluating men even if they deemed it advantageous to the religion. Indeed, the evil of their deed far overshadows its supposed merit. To those we say with sincerity and sympathy: If you are not able to tell the truth, then say no evil, for this is of the lowest degrees of Īmān!

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ¹

The high drive

OF THE WORST issues that a nation might be afflicted with is for its individuals to be possessors of limited drive, and restricted outlooks. These individuals will find themselves dwarfed by the momentous changes and turns of history, and so do not think of the possibility of influencing change or attempting future projects themselves. It is difficult to treat someone who believes that he will never recover, for he is the slave of a submissive mentality, who has never accomplished an independent action or a large collective one, never trained for leadership and so when surprised with a novel matter, he retreats with fright as he has no experience of dealing with such a matter!

The lack of self-confidence is a disease which destroys the Da'wah and its proponents, letting it exist but briefly and achieving nothing of lasting note. Even when Allah creates -for such a Da'wah- an opportunity as a mercy from Him towards His believing servants, it is wasted without utilisation. Moreover, when seeing what is required from the Call or what people expect, some Callers become dizzy with confusion. Yet this is not a surprise when one thinks of how many such opportunities have been squandered due to this lack of self-confidence.

The way out of this morass has many openings. One of which is the fact that Allah's earth is vast to those intent on inaugurating larger project. For the abilities are available but need the strong will and the sincere conviction in Allah's promise. We have in the story of Mūsa عليه السلام an awaken-

ing lesson; for Allah sent him to relieve his people of servitude and humiliation and take them towards supremacy on Earth, and the establishment of Allah's law. But his peoples' characters were feeble and trivial and they lacked the ability to carry out this great task. That was due to their long period of oppression under the Pharaohs and their servanthood to them, so hollow and insignificant became their natures that they believed themselves to be unworthy custodians of the message. On the other side, the Arab who received the direct Prophetic education was untainted by corrupting influences, and had managed to internalise hopes and ambitions translated thereafter into the storming of dangers and roaming of seas in order to deliver the message of Islam. Muslims have to dislodge themselves from environments which shackle them; in such surroundings trivial problems are made to seem as part and parcel of a larger more intractable whole, against which any effort is hopeless. Such individuals ought to believe in their own abilities and efficiency through which they are capable of grand actions.

Opportunities

WHAT IS TAKING place worldwide today is worthy of attention and contemplation. The wave of democratisation is sweeping the heartland of the most repressive and dictatorial countries: Latin America is moving to the election booth and the former Communist countries have experienced mass demonstrations calling for the restoration of people's rights. Who could have imagined such events in the hearts of powerful countries who ruled with fists of iron? Even China's Muslims demonstrated, but the Military were back to their old way of suppressing such sentiments.

Communism has evidently failed, and before it Capitalism. However, the West tries to explain the failure of the first system to its own advantage in claiming that Laissez-faire Capitalism is the answer. Yet they are akin to one intent on beautifying an old and haggard visage, one who vainly attempts to cling to youth even against age itself.

The West, although possessing some force and vitality which maintains amongst its people the inherent intent to colonise others, has declined and degenerated in a very visible way. So what is the ideological and religious solution today?

The human is not capable of living in a vacuum. He needs emotional satisfaction and support and he has to worship something. Therefore, the most truthful names for a Muslim to have as the Messenger of Allah said are *Hāreth* and *Hammām*¹, for man needs a cause that engages him, and there is none more fulfilling than Islam.

Indeed, even if the Far East is to inherit the West on a financial level, as some predict, then that vacuum will continue to exist as that region does not possess a distinctive value system that it can offer the people. Shouldn't the Muslims therefore become aware of their increasingly unique position -amongst other peoples- and their distinctiveness of purpose? Can Muslims present a true image of this religion to enable those whom Allah decreed to be guided to hurry towards Islam? The Islamic sublime morals, the unity of word and clarity of vision are some of the greatest factors that influence such people. It is a priceless opportunity to spread this Call and educate Muslims who were under the yoke of Russia, China and others.

Jihad is one of the fundamentals of Da'wah and when its banner is raised and door opened, the might of Islam, its dominance and its appeal becomes apparent. Similarly, if a peaceful opportunity appears wherein the Callers can operate freely, the opportunity ought to be exercised as per the precedent of the Treaty of Hūdaybiyah. As a result of that treaty an opening appeared and the Callers spread amongst the tribes and brought new reverts and helpers. The opportunities are many, but the vital issue is for Muslims to make use of them at the right time.

1Hāreth means he who tills, and Hammām is he who toils and strives.

There will come seven hard years

WHEN AN OPPORTUNITY arises whereby the Call to Allah becomes an active process, wherein Callers may forge links with the people and guide them, why isn't such an opportunity exercised by those best capable of succeeding?

The story of Allah's Prophet Yūsuf عليه السلام showed an outstanding far-sightedness when he wisely utilised the present period of prosperity to prepare for the coming period of austerity. He did not deceive himself or the people in thinking or promising that things were improving constantly without any setbacks.

Muslims believe that Allah does test the believers with infertile years of grimness so that they might emerge from such a period with more clarity and purity. The Muslims might also emerge with a better comprehension and an awareness that might make them more able to use every opportunity under every circumstance to take assured steps forward. We know what our enemies mischievously plot against us day and night, as well as those who actually harm and oppress Muslims. So when Allah takes those persons away, Muslims ought to take such an opportunity and multiply their efforts and solidify their positions.

The peace-treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah was a golden opportunity which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ best used. He agreed to Quraysh's conditions and the Muslims were subsequently able to deliver the Message of their Lord amongst the tribes unhindered. In a short period of time, the number of Muslims multiplied so that while the number of the com-

panions who witnessed al-Hudaybiyah was 1,400, this total rose magnificently to 10,000 who witnessed the conquest of Makkah two years later. It was that victorious treaty of al-Hudaybiyah which Allah described in: *Verily, [O Muhammad] We have laid open before you a manifest victory.*¹ (Surah al-Fath:1) Indeed, it was a victory through the opportunity it gave for the Muslims to proclaim Da'wah leading to the people embracing Islam in droves.

Truly, the invitation to Islam in a calm atmosphere of freedom of speech and discussion, through the establishment of proof and evidence coupled with fine speech will undoubtedly have a great effect amongst people. This will occur as truth vis-a-vis falsehood has a distinctively innate strength. If the Da'wah was pleasantly carried out and the Caller possessed the relevant knowledge, was aware of Islam's general goals and was alert to his surroundings, the results will be pleasing by the will of Allah.

The constant wasting of opportunities through our simplicity of thinking will inevitably end in dismay and displeasure. Particularly if we believe that a period of calm will eternally last, and that things are heading in the direction of our choice. Occasionally, it is observed that our efforts and energies are dissipated in very pale and insignificant actions, and so the days and years pass by without the establishment of a satisfactory process to which our future generations can add and contribute to

¹ إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا

Pulpits

ALTHOUGH THE IMPORTANCE of the Friday sermon is generally agreed upon, and the envy of Islam's enemies of the masses who so regularly attend is well established, nevertheless, it was not given its due attention by the Callers. For example, what is the ideal way of preaching to the people, and what are the suitable themes? How does one raise people's understanding of their religion, and how can one rebuke their mistakes, and how ought one to find solutions to their problems?

Unfortunately, the majority of sermon preachers speak with lukewarm tones, without properly delivering an idea or treating a particular problem. Others deliver sermons that are so calm as to be very cold and distant. Conversely, what is evident today in the field of Islamic Da'wah is that the fluent preachers with the strong throat and the resounding words have managed to attract a number of individuals, good-intentioned, eager and active in working for the religion. Yet these sincere individuals are transformed into a mass that does not favour tranquil thinking or depth in analysing matters. Rather, it is sufficient for this mass to live on the dreams of excitable speeches which quench their thirst.

Nevertheless, the emotional part and the importance of gathering the masses should not be underestimated. For the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was described whilst delivering a speech to be like the warner of an invading army. So it is best to combine enthusiasm and the delivery of beneficial knowledge so that a general consensus is achieved amongst the mass of Muslims that loves and aids Da'wah. Through

this endeavour, the learned, or unlearned benefit from a well-thought-of idea or an emotional reminder.

Isn't it strange that one encounters in some towns only one or two good *khutb* (Friday sermon orator), around whom the people gather, and whose sermons combine knowledge, emotion and effectiveness? It is worth remembering what one leader of an anti-Islamic party said, "If only I had something akin to these pulpits!"

The network of brotherly relations

NOTHING IS MORE hurtful for the enemies of Muslims than seeing them as a unified and strong group. Indeed, the close-knit ties of the first Islamic society had enraged the resentful hypocrites, as it has always done to Islam's enemies everywhere. Therefore, it was one of Allah's favours upon His Messenger to gather the hearts of Muslims, and He said of them: *Whose heart He has brought together, if you had expended all that is on earth, you could not have brought their hearts together: but Allah did bring them together. Verily, He is Almighty, Wise.*¹ (Surah al-Anfāl: 63) A close look at the Islamic arena today shows the weakness of fraternal relations, and its consequence in terms of dwindling hopes and shortage of returns.

The conduct of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ shows a deep concern for the brotherhood between his companions. He did not want its peace to be broken or strength weakened through a single hurtful word. The Messenger had taught the companions a rule in their relationship by saying, "Let none of you complain about one of my companions, for I love to see you all without having any ill will." Furthermore, it was reported that Abū Sufyān came across a group of companions that included Ṣuhayb and Bilāl when they said, "The swords of Allah had not taken from the enemy of Allah what it should have taken." Abū Bakr hastily replied, "How could you say this to the chief of Quraysh?" Yet when Abū Bakr mentioned this incident to the Messenger, he said to him "You could have angered them, for had you angered them, you would have angered Allah." Wherein Abū Bakr rushed

back to them and said, "O my brothers, have I angered you?" they replied "No, may Allah forgive you O Abū Bakr." Ibn Taymiyyah commented on this ḥadīth by explaining that "They said what they did as profession of their anger for Allah, and it shows the perfection of *Walā'* (loyalty) to Allah and His Messenger, and animosity towards Allah's enemies and those of His Messenger."¹

The rights of brotherhood are many and include that a brother should not bear a grudge towards his brother. Another is not to broadcast his secrets, idly debate or compete with him. Instead, he should help and aid him, and not convey to him the evil-talk of a brother concerning him. One of the predecessors advised: "if you request your brother to complete a particular task for you and he does not, then remind him for maybe he has forgotten, and if he still doesn't, then consider this brotherhood dead and read the ṣalāh of the deceased."

Furthermore, the brother should be moderate in his reproach, because its excessiveness leads to cutting-off of relations and its deficiency is an indication of the lack of concern. Visits are similar in that their scarcity leads to abandonment and the loosening of the bond of brotherhood. Indeed, the continuous mistakes in the conduct of fraternal relationships are a potential cause for real animosity. In fact modern psychologists argue that psychological complexities are not innate in the individual but are the result of the interaction between individuals. So why can we not guard this brotherhood which is founded upon pleasing Allah and which makes us more faithful and lessens much of this life's load?

¹ Ibn Taymiyah, *al-Fatāwa*. Vol 10, p 58.

وَأَلْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلْفَتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلْفَ بَيْنَهُمْ
إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Our moral crisis

HOW HURTFUL IT is to hear a Muslim complain about the state of some of his brothers, especially those men of Da‘wah. The brother mentions their rigidity and in being far removed from implementing Islam’s commands of care, leniency, soft speech, and actual compassion. The brother continues: “I entered hospital, yet was not visited by the brothers I know, but rather by my work colleagues who are ordinary Muslims and moreover, they offered to assist me in all other matters!”

We constantly hear and see how the people of falsehood help each other and those whom they desire to fall under their influence. Yet Muslims are the ones ordered to adhere to the noblest of manners and finest of behaviours, and therefore should not be excelled in this field. It is worth remembering the ḥadīth regarding the prostitute who gave water to the thirsty dog on a hot day and was subsequently forgiven by Allah and the ḥadīth speaking of the woman who will be punished for imprisoning a cat. Similarly, when the punishment of the alcohol drinker was being inflicted on one man, another cursed him and was then rebuked by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “Do not curse him, for he loves Allah and His Messenger.” And this ḥadīth reminds one of Imam Abū Ḥanifah’s story with his drunken neighbour who entered prison and was bailed by the Imam resulting in the neighbour’s sincere repentance.

The likely reason for this rigidity and uncouth behaviour by some of the Callers to Islam is their ignorance of

the Messenger's way in uniting the hearts. These Callers when viewing those negligent in practising some voluntary acts of worship might treat them with discourtesy. They might only greet them with a faint voice, full of indifference, not care for them, and not attempting to bring them close through the polite word or good service in order for their hearts to incline to the Sunnah and its people. Indeed the one who looks down at his neglectful brothers suffers from a more severe malady that is self-fancy and pride. This same proud group is often found falling into the detestable backbiting by calling it criticism and evaluation, and where the shortcomings of a Muslim are talked about whilst they probably do not even exist as most of them were derived from mere delusions.

After all that, haven't we the right to regard a part of our crisis as a moral one? It is a part of our general decline, but without its awareness, we will not be able to find a way out.

Informed talk

I HAVE RECEIVED a letter from some Muslim students in the Far East saying that they are confused with the talk taking place about a particular Caller or a particular group. They said that they hear much criticism and accusations of misguidance and deviation. They also said that the names are many and they are searching for the true method that a Muslim should adopt towards these events.

The queries of those brothers are not exclusive to them, and in fact most of the brothers had heard something similar, and were mystified in their search for the truth in the quagmire of divisions. Such brothers can be somehow excused for the enormity of what is written and what is said about matters that only create agonising doubts and do not benefit the Da‘wah. I said ‘somehow’ since the educated Muslims like the enquiring brothers have to possess a scale that enables them to gauge the situation of the Da‘wah and its Callers. Indeed the first scale is that of Allah’s saying: *And never concern yourself with anything of which you have no knowledge.*¹ (Surah al-Isrā’: 36). And much of what is said is in fact done without knowledge as tales spread, fuelled by partisan sentiments, and relying on paucity of readings and judgements reached without adequate authentication.

Notably, of those scales, is the methodology of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah’s, which is the following the noted scholars of the early and best decades and generations in their understanding and reference from the Book and the Sunnah. Clearly, this path is more worthy of following, and

the closer one is to this approach the closer he is to the truth. This methodology is not a mere term used in congregations but a practical and scientific implementation of its principles and the respect to its scholars and Callers. Also, a part of it is the justice in pronouncing decrees even if they were on enemies, and the avoidance of words against the honour of a Muslim.

Those who do not possess these attributes are clearly astray. This is because they leave aside the people of oppression and debauchery and pursue the Callers with criticism and faultfinding. This, indeed, is the method of the Kharijites who let alone idol worshippers and slew the people of Īmān.

Another point of measure is observing how Allah bequeaths His favour upon the Callers of the pure method by making their Call acceptable throughout the earth, and makes their projection of Islam attractive. This is not the case with the people of innovations, and this makes them more angry and envious, and so they increase their accusations and pitiful talk. And matters are judged by their ends and from their fruits they shall be known.

So look, o inquirer into the Islamic fields of Da‘wah: who is sacrificing, and who is not? And let us take a lesson from what the forefathers said: “If you see someone mentioning Imam Mālik with ill, then know that he is an innovator.”

¹ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

Unhealthy attachment to individuals

IS IT TRUE that Muslims have abandoned their blind attachment to individuals? And is it true that they have relinquished their obsession to be the submissive students of the Shaykh? Yes, they have done so but only in theory. Yet the truth remains that their inner feelings says NO, as they can always be seen practising it, loving this role, for it is an obstinate disease.

Many Muslims have abandoned the Shaykh in the Sufi conception of attachment, but replaced that with the leader, the party, banners and names that carry an equal amount of reverence and following. They long for the new shaykh like the small camel for its mother, and await a word or a move for all what the shaykh pronounces is the truth. And then they will not spare a moment in spreading his talks and speeches wherever they go. There is no doubt that the observer notices strange things in this phenomenon, for however one tries to distance them from their practices they return to it through different methods and appearances. They are akin to the infants taking refuge with their mother, and who cannot behave independently. Truly, the unhealthy attachment is nothing but an infantile behaviour.

What about the remedy? The remedy is through looking at what this erroneous rapport achieved for the Muslims past and present, and through observing the recent past, not the distant one, to really see how it afflicted the youth resulting in countless mistakes and disasters. It is those youth who stand open-mouthed, in awe and stupid admiration to

whomsoever gives them a resounding speech, not distinguishing between the knowledgeable, and he who claims it falsely. Neither do they distinguish between the honest and the hypocrite, leading to their exploitation by the claimants to knowledge and Da'wah -whose aim is to amass worldly gain and who boast of large following.

This article is a lamentation of the unhealthy and indeed destructive phenomenon whose existence stifles hope. For this practice is an indication of the level of thought and of maturity, of those who regardless of age or intellects fall prey to this condition. This, of course, does not mean abandoning the love and healthy attachment to the active scholars and trusted Callers, in order to benefit from their experiences and respect them. For this is a must, and although the truth is innately strong, it still needs the men to carry it.

If one asks about how to distinguish between the two groups of men in order to benefit from the truthful ones, then the answer is that from their fruits you shall know them.

The engineering of social relations

ONE OF THE worst misfortunes that could befall the Da‘wah is internal conflict due to the torn web of relationships between its members. Conflict, envy and competition for posts are an example. Some of these problems are self-evident and are not committed by the sincere Muslim Callers. Yet there are issues which are more subtle that deserve to be duly analysed, namely the issue of weak social awareness and inter-personal relations. The symptoms are our ignorance of how to discuss a matter, how should one of us react and reply to another who erred, how to respect the elders amongst us, how to postpone a discussion on a matter fearing that instant resolution might give rise to bad feelings, and how to advise or rebuke?

One reason for our ignorance is our inherent lack of interest in this field, and this occurs because our energies are primarily devoted to abstract disciplines. Yet this area of fraternity relationships requires a distinct effort through which personalities and characters are understood, and where they are treated in the way that befits them. For human beings are not of the same character. Indeed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is our prime guide in this matter which is reflected in how he treated his companions with their different dispositions. Abū Bakr was lenient and gentle, and ‘Umar firm, whereas ‘Uthmān shy. And it seems that the personality of ‘Alī was misunderstood by some companions as it was narrated that the Messenger ﷺ asked al-Zubayr bin al-‘Awām about his love for ‘Alī to which he answered, “How

can I not love him when he is my fellow believer and cousin?" So the Messenger informed him, "You will fight him, and you will be the transgressor." It seems that the Messenger wanted to warn al-Zubayr and others to the possibility of misunderstanding 'Ali's character. Later on, al-Zubayr had forgotten the Prophetic lesson but was reminded by 'Ali himself at the battle of al-Jamal, so he promptly left the battlefield. Today, one sees a brother who suspects that another has an unsavoury characteristic and therefore continues to treat him accordingly for years whilst the victimised knows nothing of it! The accusing brother had never ascertained the truth of his assumptions, but rather persisted in his transgression until he finds out the truth, by which time the bond had been severed.

It is a tragedy for this phenomenon to be committed by people of good intentions, and this is due to their endeavours being solely connected to theoretical affairs and their abode in books without knowledge of contemporary affairs and how to deal with them. We should benefit from the way which Prophetic example instilled an awareness and flexibility in dealing with people of different temperaments. This is essential if we are to locate areas of error in our current situation, for unfortunately they are many.

Group activities

THE FIRST GENERATION of the companions had a deep understanding of the goals of Islam and its aims in reforming mankind. The Ummah then was in a state of construction, consolidation, awareness and vigour. Therefore, it was able to sometimes inadvertently fulfil the large enlightened tasks based upon the nature of Islam itself. In such circumstances, the Rightly Guided Caliph 'Uthmān bin 'Afān ﷺ decided to complete a large scientific assignment that testifies to the truthfulness in the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Observe my Sunnah and that of the righteous and guided caliphs after me..."

From his concern and fear for the Muslims' possible disagreements about the recitation of the Qur'ān, the Caliph 'Uthmān decided to bring them together on one Qur'ān. Hence, he established a scientific committee that included Zayd bin Thābit, 'Abd Allah bin al-Zubayr, Sa'īd bin al-'Āṣ, and 'Abd al-Raḥman bin al-Ḥārith bin Hishām. The Caliph then chose Sa'īd bin al-'Āṣ as the most fluent in Arabic to head the committee and for Zayd to record the Qur'ān. He then told them, "If a difference was to occur, then write with the dialect of Quraysh as the Qur'ān was revealed in their tongue." The committee fulfilled its task, and it was probably the first scientific committee in Islam. As a result, a copy of the Qur'ān was sent to different countries and thus the people were brought together under one Qur'ān.

This great action which is derived from the heart of Islamic civilisation of scientific research and collective ac-

tion begs a look at our current state. We are very distant from the collective, and especially in scientific projects that can bring together skills and abilities for the mutual benefit. This is attributable to the novelty of our scientific institutions based on co-operative efforts that produces what the individual can not do alone.

Our civilisational backwardness that we have inherited and are living through today distances us from institutional action. Selfishness is deeply entrenched in us, and it is observed how the individuals amongst us cannot work together in a methodical project as he is not used to friendly participation, discussion and listening to the other's views. Truly, the joint efforts and actions, if conducted within a clear methodological framework, should lead to results satisfactory to all.

For each one to be given his right

WITH AMAZEMENT ONE watches the confusion of terms and titles in the Islamic fields of Da'wah. There, people call upon the thinker to be a scholar of Fiqh, the scholar of Fiqh to be a preacher, the preacher a scholar. And so a person concerned with studying Fiqh or Ḥadīth might be asked regarding the most detailed of political affairs, and so he answers outrageously. Similarly, the preacher might be asked about the most intricate of doctrinal matters resulting in many erroneous answers, as if it is assumed that those people's knowledge in one area necessitates the knowledge in all others!

Generally speaking, people desire the abilities of a whole nation to be present in one man. This view tends to be oblivious to the fact that skills and abilities are spread amongst people, and that Allah might favour some with moving oratory that fulfils the needs of heart and emotion. Others are favoured by Allah with beauty of expression, and some with eloquent writing and others with depth in matters of thought. People, as it is said, are either learned or learners, and each can be benefited from according to their own talents.

It is related that the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn wanted the noted historian al-Wāqidī to memorise a medium-length Surah (chapter) from the Qur'ān but to no avail, and so he concluded: "This is a man whom Allah blessed with the study of history." Furthermore, an academic observer of the time remarked, "Sufyān al-Thawrī is a scholar of Ḥadīth and

Imam al-Awza'ī is a scholar of Sunnah. Imam Mālik is a scholar of both fields." Indeed, this matter of evaluating individuals in terms of their abilities and academic status was extremely plain for that generation. None was thereby raised above his station, and none robbed of due recognition. Today, we observe that any articulate speaker or fluent preacher is referred to as the Scholar, Shaykh and the eminent Caller! This form of deceit leads to misguidance wherein people turn to unsuited persons for Fatwa and answers. Amazingly, some of the new reverts to Islam are often asked detailed religious matters whilst they are the ones most in need of religious education at the hands of scholars.

I heard our distinguished teacher Muhammad Amīn al-Maṣrī, may Allah be merciful on him,¹ say: "The scholar is the Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shanqīṭī, and I am but a little student of knowledge." Yet this is of the humbleness of our teacher, for his exegesis (Tafsīr) of Surah al-Anfāl shows a depth of knowledge and extensive research. Muslims ought to know that there are the learned and there are learners, there are the speakers, the preachers and the writers. This will help to correct the overturned balance and clarify matters by placing things in their correct station. The personality beloved by the people that excel in public relations is fit for public work, speaking to the masses and instructing them. The Islamic thinker on the other hand, might be found far from such an atmosphere but his deep analysis and penetrating study of society should wisely be sought. Ideally, the scholar should be also a teacher, cultivating the Ummah and correcting it. Yet if this was not found to be so, then the totality of whatever ability Allah had blessed them with ought to be utilised.

¹Dr. Muḥammad Amīn al-Maṣrī was a teacher of Ḥadīth in the department of higher studies of the Islamic University in Madīnah.

The pitfalls of the way

THE ROLE OF the reformer is to teach people well, and instruct them in virtue, and for them to learn the kinds of knowledge from him, and implement them. Yet there are other functions besides. The reformer should also be aware and alert, noting the misapplications of knowledge, and fearing human inner evil whispers. By this practice, the reformer will be aware of future pitfalls, and able to prevent his students from disastrous misunderstandings. For the inner self has many flaws which weaken it in terms of an obsession with abnormalities, and a love for pretence and self-admiration. So the reforming tutor is the one who guards knowledge from the misuse and mischievous desires that lead to evil outcomes. He also protects knowledge from the apprentice who has not yet become qualified in a discipline.

Therefore, when general terms are aired without any clarification, the laymen will misunderstand them. This will lead to a confusion of thought especially if the matter relates to an issue of belief, i.e. al-Walā' wa al-Barā', Īmān and Kufr. It is from this area that divisions and disagreements arise and a myriad of opinions is created. Primarily, this is due to a deficiency in the tutor's cultivation of his students.

This alert approach of leaving no one in doubt and of constant clarification of an issue is a Qur'ānic one, related through many verses. Allah says: *Such are the believers as remain passive -other than the disabled- cannot be deemed equal to those who strive hard in Allah's cause with their possessions and*

*their lives. Allah has exalted those who strive hard with their possessions and their lives far above those who remain passive. Although Allah has promised the ultimate good unto all [believers], yet has Allah exalted those who strive hard above those who remain passive by [promising them] a mighty reward.*¹ (Surah al-Nisā': 95)
 And also in: *And yet, [O believers] it was not you who slew the enemy, but it was Allah who slew them; and it was not you who cast when you did cast it, but it was Allah who cast it.*¹¹ (Surah al-Anfāl: 17)

It was also the Prophetic method in repeating the word thrice in order for it to be comprehended, and in the nature of speech itself being plain and unambiguous. This is evident in how the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ had taught the Muslims the etiquette of addressing the Prophets, so that no error is committed even unintentional. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "It is not permissible for a servant to say that I am better than Yūnus bin Matta." And when a man called him "O Messenger of Allah, O best of creation", he answered him: "That was Ibrāhīm."

This method was also that of the pious forefathers. The Tabi'ī scholar of Fiqh 'Ubaydah al-Salmānī feared whilst on his deathbed people's wanton use and misquotes of his books and out of piety asked for them to be erased. In the same vein, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said something that did not adhere to Ahl al-Sunnah's approach, and therefore ibn 'Awn said: "Had we known that those misunderstood words of al-Ḥasan were to reach where they did, we would have written a book about his innocence, and made many people witness it. But we say that it was a word uttered but misquoted."

In the Islamic world today, there is a scientific renaissance, and there are many students of knowledge who are full of sincerity about studying it and are eager to be in the company of scholars and those conducting cultivation. Yet

if the scholar is not of those concerned with cultivation, caring little for his students' academic upbringing, the consequences will be excessiveness, division and self fancy by the students. This state is not pleasing to those concerned with the spread of Islam and the best interest of Da'wah. Those pitfalls are present today, and it is our wish that the cultivating tutors take note of them, and try to fill this gap in order for the building process to be healthy.


I لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ
 الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

II فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَئِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَلَا تَمْسِكُوا إِلَهُكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ أَعْيُنُكُمْ وَأَنْفُسُكُمْ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَلَا تَمْسِكُوا إِلَهُكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ أَعْيُنُكُمْ وَأَنْفُسُكُمْ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَلَا تَمْسِكُوا إِلَهُكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ أَعْيُنُكُمْ وَأَنْفُسُكُمْ

The methodology of equability

WILL THIS ISLAMIC Da'wah be able to eradicate the discord and division that has often arrested the development of Islamic action? Or will these blemishes reoccur, with even more vigour, leaving the laymen baffled by the amount of difference in religious decrees which are proclaimed without authoritative reliance on either revelation? If so, then, it will be the right of the Muslim to inquire about the increasing frequency of this phenomenon in the last few years, and whether it is so natural.

The phenomenon of excessiveness or laxity in commands and prohibitions are old trends that could be attributable to the fallible nature of man; unwilling to force himself to adopt a methodology of adherence, moderation and fairness. Both excessiveness and carelessness are manifestations of inner desires, worldly ambitions and ignorance of Islam's fundamentals and general aspirations. The blemishes mentioned above grow when knowledge decreases and those learned men's numbers dwindle. Although knowledge is accessible today, praise be to Allah, the number of independent scholars who combine knowledge, piety, and are an authority amongst the Muslims, and the youth in particular, are few. Some countries might have none of them.

If we intend to benefit from the past, then there are two experiences that show the value of knowledge when coupled with the practical implementation of it in countering the phenomenon of excessiveness. The first lesson is when the Kharijites departed the camp of 'Alī  and Ibn

‘Abbās ﷺ had therefore asked ‘Alī’s permission to go and debate with them in order to direct them to the truth. ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Abbas went to them, asked about their grievances and successfully replied to their delusions from the authority of Qur’ān and Sunnah. As a result, many returned in repentance to the ranks of ahl al-Sunnah.

The second lesson can be taken from the time of the Umayyads. During their rule the Kharijites innovation continued, but when ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz may Allah be merciful on him became Caliph he debated with them. Renowned as a blessed scholar, the Kharijites could not find in his demeanour or behaviour any cause for condemnation or reproach, as was the case with his predecessors. During ‘Umar’s deliberations a great number of the Kharijites approved all of his arguments with the sole exception of his previous consent for Yazīd bin ‘Abd al-Malek to be his successor. The Caliph ‘Umar promised to resolve this issue but died before he could fulfil it.

The conclusion from the above two examples is that only those well versed in knowledge are the ones who can unveil delusions. They are the scholars who explain Islam’s rules on *all* of the contemporary issues, and answer the questions that perplex Muslim youth. Therefore, Da‘wah ought to take practical steps to strengthen the Islamic front academically, socially and economically. This is a direct answer to man’s innate inclinations towards those who find solutions to this life’s complexities. Thus reverted the Kharijites after observing a truthful and practical example in the life of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Yet those of evil intentions and desires who enjoy probing into the honour of Muslims, and who struggle in imaginary battles, wasting thereby their time in debates of no value, these should be discarded, and the caravan should proceed without them.

In order to strengthen your heart

MANY WORKERS IN the field of Islamic Da'wah complain of the phenomenon of apathy which had become prevalent in the last few years, and afflicted many wholesome activities. This phenomenon is natural when it occurs sporadically, owing to inherent human fallibility and weakness, yet it becomes less so when it continuously and enduringly reappears. Such a case is worthy of study in order to locate reasons and causes. Its biggest cause -and Allah best knows- is the lack of renewal in Islamic action, and the movement from one stage into another; that of weakness to strength, lack of knowledge to its mastery, from theoretical analysis to practical implementation and partial planning to a universal one. This renewal process will raise the spirit of the Muslim and indeed his level of Īmān making him stronger in pushing forward the process of change. It is dispiriting to see the arrest on a particular line of thought which was aired by a Caller or a thinker decades ago, as what was fitting in the forties and fifties might not suit today's needs. Similarly, the writings of that period, and the period that proceeded it about ways of Da'wah and the banners of that time were not all correct. It is true that those Callers had the honour of pioneering, yet truth ought to be heeded to. It is also dispiriting and bizarre for leaders of Da'wah to claim, "This man said and this man wrote" in reference to men of the aforementioned period, leading to the question: either nothing was added in the last thirty years or that those claimants know little about the Islamic arena!

When the state of Da'wah is researched in its first stage, that of the message era, the trend of advancement is very visible without any setbacks. In this process, the Muslims rose in number and the Call attracted important personalities and then it found itself a refuge in Abbyssina. After that, many of the important personalities of Quraysh voiced their sympathy with the besieged Muslims in al-Shi'b, then came the great 'Aqabah oath of allegiance which represented a very important new turn for Da'wah, and then the Hijrah to the land of Islam-Madīnah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had therefore transferred the Muslims step by step on the road to dominion, as the Makkan period was a preparation for the Madīnan. Indeed, every stage whether in Makkah or Madīnah was the starting point for the following one, just as every individual upon completing a task increases in hope and strength and feels readier for action. Thus, the Qur'ān was revealed piecemeal to fortify the Messenger's ﷺ heart, and for the Muslims to live with the Qur'ān as a practical experience to correct and cultivate them.

So if Islam is the truth, how did our present situation come about unless there is a defect in the knowledge of what leads to reform and what leads to corruption, and a lack of leaders who can take the Muslims forward to their next station? Maybe then Allah will soothe the anger and wrath in the hearts of the believers against their enemies.

A type of Da'wah

THE WAYS OF conveying the Call to non-Muslims are many and the Caller ought to select what he feels are the most effective. Some people will never respond unless they are witness to a magnificent spectacle which pulls them towards Islam captivating them, making them re-examine their previous calculations, making them think deeper, and having contrasted past and present then taking that bold decision to embrace Islam. They decide to submit, but this is the submission of the confident and resolute person who now truly knows the truth; not the surrender of a weak faithless individual.

Thus stood the Queen of Saba' who worshipped the sun with her followers when she was called by Sulaymān عليه السلام to Islam. She stood aloof, even in the face of her knowledge of her weakness vis-a-vis Sulaymān and his armies. Yet when the Queen entered the court and saw the awesome spectacle of the fathomless expanse of water, *She cried: "O my Sustainer! I have been sinning against myself, but now I have surrendered myself with Sulaymān unto the Sustainer of all the worlds."*¹ (Surah al-Naml: 44). Indeed, she was shown images of unsurpassable might in order to have a great impact on her heart and lead her to Īmān. Conceding that material miracles are not the basis of Islam, isn't the Muslim's own loyalty and observance of his religion in all matters of his life the greatest of miracles?

Similarly the story of the conversion of Khālīd bin al-Walīd is another example. He left Makkah towards Madīnah

and was met on the way by 'Amr bin al-ʿĀṣ who asked: "Where to, O Abū Sulaymān?" Khālīd replied: "The path is now very clear." Both great men then migrated together to Madīnah. Indeed, Khālīd was a unique and a formidable military leader, and he undoubtedly sensed that Muslims' victories were those of the truly guided led by a Prophet who embodied human perfection, favoured and aided by Allah. After a long succession of conflicts between Badr and Ḥudaybiyah, Khālīd surrendered the surrender of the strong and the intelligent who are ready, willing and able to take the correct decision.

Nowadays, we hear of some Europeans who embrace Islam when they see the Muslims lined in prayer, attentive to Allah, and turning solely towards Him. The French philosopher Renan said: "Every time I see the lines of Muslims in prayer, I am overwhelmed by a sense of awe, pitiful for myself for not being a Muslim." This statement is a truthful one uttered by a liar, for what holds him from embracing Islam?

The attractive presentation of Islam coupled with the firm belief in and sufficient knowledge of the faith are possibly the strongest causes for people's conversion to Islam. This is evident in the description of 'Abd Allah bin 'Abbās's interpretation of Sūrah al-Baqarah during the days of Mina in Hajj. It was said that had Jews and Christians heard his interpretation, then they would have embraced Islam. So it remains evident that the most successful Call to Islam is conducted by Muslims' own observance of its rules and rites, etiquette and manners, and their unswerving adherence on it in the face of errant societies.

قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ¹

The nature of Islam

THE NATURE OF Islam is antithetical to a growth sustained through conferences held in luxurious hotels and in halls and corridors that cost tens if not hundreds of thousands of Dollars. This issue was plain to the pioneer Callers who grew up in the Da'wah and lived its concerns, and studied the Sīrah and lived its stages from the cave of Hira' to the siege of al-Shi'b, and from the Da'wah in Tā'if and the contacts with the tribes to the Jihad, and then the construction of the state.

The noble Qur'ān had rebuked excessive spending and spenders, and ordered Muslims to refrain from such practices and called for modesty in all of life's issues. Also, it expressly forbade the excessive spending in the pursuit of luxuries. Furthermore, if this prohibition was necessary when Islam was dominant, so what about when it is in a state of alienation and its people irresolute and weak-being fought both by those near and from afar?

Islam will not flourish except through striving and struggle and the provision of a real refuge for Muslims' social and psychological peace. Moreover, it will only prosper through the assistance that provides aid for the oppressed against the oppressor, and realises the meaning of association and brotherhood in practice and not theoretically in books about 'Islamic brotherhood.' Rather, as Allah said: *Behold, as for those who have attained to faith, and migrated and are striving hard, with their possessions and their lives, in Allah's cause, as well as those who shelter and succour [them] -these are [truly] the friends and protectors of one another.*¹ (Surah al-Anfāl: 72)

Ever since the rise of this phenomenon of conferences hosted in hotels, no visible improvement was sensed in strengthening the Islamic front. Moreover, the amounts spent there are sufficient to establish a school and maybe a college in one of the poor Muslim countries. And out of such an institution hundreds of students might graduate who are cultivated on a faultless method and high morals, becoming thereafter effective and potent in their own countries.

How can we give our wealth to the Western hoteliers and then claim that our action will greatly intensify Islam's progress? If such an action of holding conferences at luxurious hotels is so successful and important, then Muslims ought to own such special places in order for them to preserve their wealth.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰءُ بَعْضٍ

Shāmah

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ALWAYS last. This expression denotes the importance in Da‘wah of impressions portrayed externally in one’s appearance, manners, and speech. An example is of a Caller to Islam I knew who always made a good impression and who was amply qualified in disciplines beneficial in this life and the hereafter, coupled with many practical skills. The result was of many people requesting his help; even those who opposed him in thought and methodology. Consequently, this had a beneficial and far-reaching effect amongst his community, and clearly this brother was nothing short of a *shāmah*.¹

The Messenger of Allah elucidated this concept of *shāmah* in the hadīth narrated by Abū al-Dardā’ and related by Abū Dawūd when he said, “You are about to reach your brethren from travel, so adjust your attire and amend your vehicles until you become akin to the *shāmah* amongst the people by your distinctiveness.” The intention of his teaching was to engender in each Muslim not only fine character but also its external realization - demonstrated in good taste in appearance, since an unappealing image is a cause for aversion. Yet again this reinforces the Prophetic recommendation for Muslims to reform their character in all aspects internal and external.

The consequence of this equitable character is an understanding of the necessity of an appropriate appearance when giving Da‘wah. Too often we find Muslims attired in a fashion that fosters derision or suspicion. Therefore, it is

when the banner of Jihad is erected that one must don military attire, and similarly, when at work to wear what is practical, and crucially, when giving Da'wah to wear fine garments devoid of excess and pride.

Is it an idealistic notion for the character of the Muslim to be refined and elegant? Nay, it is not an imaginary picture, and although it is not achieved by the majority of Muslims, nevertheless its presence amongst a few involved in their communities or work places will have a profound effect in strengthening the Islamic Call.

In this age where evil is rife in all its forms - particularly hypocrisy, lying, breaches of trust and the pursuit of hedonism - the Muslim is indeed a rare commodity. Particularly if he exemplifies this character through nobility of manner, and the representation of Islam in his image, moves, speech and silence.

The pre-Islamic Arabs used to call the one who was literate, a swimmer and an archer as 'the complete.' So how would we describe the man of Da'wah who is equipped with a mission and bolstered by fine attributes, vocational skills and a humanitarian concern? Truly he would be a *shāmah* amongst his people.

¹Meaning the beauty spot, and in this context referring to a unique and distinctive feature that accentuates beauty.

Specialisation or generalisation

THE WEST BECAME obsessed with specialisation and valued it enormously for the benefits it saw in it. One sees how the teacher or worker possesses little knowledge outside his field, and generally, this is positive thing as it produces results and increases skill. Yet excessive specialisation undoubtedly leads to a narrowness of horizon and ignorance in other fields of knowledge. On the other side, Muslims lean towards the encyclopaedic knowledge, attempting to gather and grasp voluminous and scattered amounts of information on differing disciplines. There, the individual is requested to know all, and to have an experience in all things! Many are still attracted to the old descriptions of *al-ʿĀlim al-Baḥr*,¹ forgetting that these titles were coined a long time ago describing men of those times. Whereas in today's ever changing world, due to constant burgeoning of information one could not, even if one intended and a chance beckoned, become an encyclopaedia of knowledge on the line of the forefathers.

The field of Daʿwah mirrors that of knowledge, and so the Caller will never be able to give each and every arena its due time. If the Caller does attempt it, the efforts will be weak and the successes small and sporadic. Yet the Muslim Caller is often called upon to be the citizen, the trader, the writer, the Imām, the commentator and the one entrusted to remedy society's ills. Obviously, only a minute number of men are able to sustain such overwhelming responsibility, and even when some are blessed with knowledge, ability, patience and endurance in abundance, there are many more

below them who are not, but need the help, and cultivation of skills to master one of the many disciplines.

We have seen some of our teachers who fulfilled such a duty of education and cultivation, yet became occupied with a heavy workload that eventually prevented them from continuing that duty. We ended up losing them twice: The first occurred when we did not benefit from their speciality, and the second loss was that we did not benefit from our teachers when their maturity and depth of experience reached its highest level.

It should not be understood that this is a belittling of the importance of general information and horizon expansion and the abilities of the multi-talented. Rather, this is a call for the comprehension of today's age and its requirements. It is also a call for the comprehension of today's affairs, and the speed in which they evolve, and what this age produces in terms of timesaving devices that the Callers to Allah's religion can utilise. It is also a call to the people of specialisation to moderate themselves by attaining a broadness of horizon in order that their efforts not are wasted.

¹ Literally means the scholar the sea, referring to the excessive breadth and depth of knowledge.

A lesson from the Sīrah

WE SHOULD ALWAYS refer back to the Prophetic Sīrah for inspiration and guidance in our path of Da'wah. We should also go back to learn the basic conditions of forming the strong base in the early stages akin to how the magnificent group later named al-Muhajirīn was formed. The Muhajirīn were mostly from Quraysh, a tribe that possessed unique attributes in which they excelled and surpassed all other Arabic tribes, both near and far.

Strangely, Quraysh had abandoned the then prevalent Bedouin tradition of raids and robbery. Yet at the same time never lost their bravery, strength and self-esteem. Similarly, their constant trade did not corrupt their nature. Dissimilar to the manners of merchants, they did not become greedy, miserly or exceedingly obsessive. Rather, they competed to feed the pilgrims, an honour praised highly in their poetry.

In such an environment, the innate nature of the individual makes his foundation firm. So what would transpire when Allah honours him with Īmān and pure Tawḥīd? Undoubtedly, he will become an individual who will construct states and nations and move history. Before that, Allah ﷻ had described this religion as the Fiṭrah, meaning that the intrinsic and uncorrupted Fiṭrah will accept Islam and submit to its detailed principles. But if the Fiṭrah is adulterated, and the basic make-up missing, then how could the individual carry the light? Worst still, how could he represent this ideal whilst carrying the means of weakness, inferiority, the defects of modern civilisation, and the contra-

dictions of the society that he lives in?

Has one the ability to carry the trust of Allah whilst a liar? Or a nationalistic bigot? Or one that lacks faithfulness and courage? Here, one finds many individuals that are unable to raise countries or build tightly woven structures, even if they had read and memorised books and become in due course disputants and debaters. Rather, it is the comprehension and implementation of the faultless 'Aqīdah that leads to the sublime morals which are necessary for the bearer of the mission. If such characters are not available, then there is either a fault in the comprehension of 'Aqīdah or in its implementation.

Truly, the severe and savage circumstances that Muslims are living through will lead them to look seriously into their own affairs and become more mindful of them. Allah ﷻ had given the examples of the Israelites and their twisted manners and crushed corrupt characters in order for us not to fall in the same pit. It was these morals that our Prophet Mūsa عليه السلام agonised over enormously as he tried to reform them. Then came the Seal of the Messages ﷺ and his companions from amongst the Muhajirīn and Anṣār, and these were the best comprehenders of Da'wah, its declaration and its defence.

And their brethren would further corrupt them¹

IT IS NOT SURPRISING for the secularists to resort via their propaganda against the Islamists to the repetitive accusation: "Your sole ambition is to be in power, and you use religion to reach your goal." Nor is it strange that they constantly regurgitate the same tedious discourse about 'political Islam' and 'fundamentalism' in a pale imitation of Western writings. The secularists believe that they place the Islamists in a tight corner through their 'controversial' journalism.

Yet this accusation is not novel to the Callers to Allah as the contemporary secularists have their predecessors of old. They are the courtiers of the Pharaoh as the Qur'ān relates their dialogue with Mūsa عليه السلام: *Said Mūsa: Do you speak thus of the truth after it has been brought to you? Can this be sorcery? But sorcerers can never come to a happy end*. [the great ones replied]: *"Have you come to turn us away from what we found our forefathers believing in and doing, so that the two of you might become supreme in this land? However, we do not believe in you two!"* ¹¹ (Surah Yūnus: 77-8) "This line of accusative inquiry is: will you admit and confess that you came to dislodge us from our fathers and forefathers national religion in order to follow yours? Also, will you admit your desire for you and your brother to head the religious leadership and what comes with it in terms of greatness, and worldly dominion in the whole of Egypt? Will you confess that there is no purpose from your Da'wah but to serve your own ends, even if you do not

admit it?"¹

Isn't the discourse of our secularists a parroting version of the above one? Lets see who gave them the right to rule and forbade it from the Islamists? Why is politics lawful for them whilst prohibited for all others? What are their qualifications to be in charge of the people to guide them to what is best? And what have they achieved whilst in power for decades over the Ummah in most parts of the Muslim World? They have achieved nothing but the weakening of knowledge and academia, the downturn of development, the establishment of bribery, oppression, and the rise of parasitic sections that had sucked the wealth of society. Worst of all, the Ummah had lost the dearest thing it possesses, its identity and loyalty.

How daring are those who filled the earth with their nationalist slogans, those who abandoned their culture and were disloyal to their Ummah. Analogously, the European secularists have not forsaken their heritage as did ours. In the eighties, the Republicans won in the U.S and were dominated by the right wing of the party led by a university professor whose religious lectures were heard in many colleges. Then, we did not hear of an uproar caused due to the triumph of 'political Christianity.' Verily, one does not know what kind of humans our secularists are?

This earth is the property of Allah, and He does not like corruption and oppression as Allah said: *And my covenant does not embrace the evildoers.*^{III} (Surah al-Baqrah: 124) And the Muslim is ordered to be just, fair and merciful towards the creation. Indeed the master of creations the Messenger of Allah Muḥammad ﷺ had assumed the role of the just ruler who organised people's affairs to the best of their interests in this life and the next. The Messenger was then followed by Abū Bakr and 'Umar ؓ, who never belittled

their responsibility nor did they abandon it, and they never separated between life and religion or religion and politics, and only then did justice, mercy and civilisation embrace the earth.

If those secularists argue about the existence of mistakes from some Muslim corners, then what they have committed is graver. And Muslims will always be more just and merciful, and are the ones independent of allying themselves to the enemies of the Ummah.

¹ Shaykh Rashīd Riḍa, *Tafsīr al-Manār*.

^I وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ

^{II} قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ أَسِحْرُهُ هَذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَلْفِنَا عَزَمًا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا وَتَكُونُ لَكُمُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

^{III} لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

Defending the fundamentals

TILL NOW, THERE are many Muslims who live in the mentality of the 1940s or 50s when the assault on Islam was at its fiercest led by the Orientalists, the Missionaries and the secular parties. Then, the position of many Muslims was characterised by weakness akin to the guilty defendant who feels defeated, and so operated with an inherent inferiority complex towards whatever is received from the East or West or the parties that called themselves 'progressive.'

During those days Islam was accused of having despotic tendencies. Some Muslims replied to this allegation by insisting that it is 'democratic.' They claimed that Muslim lands were conquered through the sword, and that Muslims were bloodthirsty in their wars. So some replied that Muslims never attacked or overwhelmed any by force, but solely defended themselves when attacked from outside. Furthermore, they cite the lands of Indonesia, Malaysia, and West Africa as examples of areas that Islam reached and prospered through trade and Da'wah.

Then the accusers spoke much about the polygamy and issues of divorce and the alleged 'woman problem' in Islam. The reply to this conniving assault came in countless articles and even volumes of books, yet all speaking with a defeated tone that polygamy is only for necessity and that Islam gave equal status to the woman and that she represents half of society...etc. It is true that some of what was said was in fact true, yet much was incorrect.

Nowadays many Muslims still live in this mentality. So

when they present Islam, it is presented with a degree of shyness. They might even speak about the approximity of religions when arguing with a Christian, or claim that Islam does not dislike or prohibit certain things that are in fact detested or ḥarām when entering a dialogue with the people of negligence and laxity.

One thought that this weak position had ended, or should end and that there is no need to re-reply and regurgitate these matters. The Muslims have assumed the attacking position whilst full of confidence and originality, thanks to the many scholars and Callers of this age who reawakened this conviction, most notably the Caller and martyr Sayyed Quṭb may Allah be merciful upon him.

Nevertheless, one still hears and reads some Islamists' writings on the subject of women and family which pushes us back to the kind of past mentioned earlier. The nature of these writings seem to assume our guilt for womens' oppression and not having granting their rights that the enemies of Islam want, and so those kind-hearted Muslims step forward to award her more than what she is capable of and what she was created for. We Muslims do not have a problem called 'women's problem', for Allah had created His creations for His worship and all are facilitated to what they were created for. Each has a duty in this life, and may Allah bequeath mercy upon those who know their own status. As for the mutilation of the Fiṭrah that Allah created mankind on, it will only result in mass devastation.

The other issue that many are shy of mentioning is Jihad. Forgetting thereby that it is the pinnacle of Islam as described by the Messenger, decreed by Allah and encouraged by Him, and is an unrivalled distinguishable feature of this Ummah. Jihad is also a part of the Da'wah process, and through it people might come to see Islam in theory and

practice combined. Such a process is mercy and not compulsion. In fact most of the Muslim lands were won over through Jihad. Are we then to be embarrassed from a rule Allah had enacted for us whilst some are proud by upholding the worst of theories, like these of Marx and his ilk?

The noble Qur'ān had indeed taught us the way to reply to the disbelievers' allegations, and how to turn it into an assault of our own. This is evident in Allah's reply to Quraysh's accusation of the Muslim's disregard for the sacred months through the killing and taking of prisoners that took place by the reconnaissance expedition of 'Abd Allah bin Jahsh whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent. Allah says: *They will ask you about fighting in the sacred months. Say: "fighting in it is an awesome thing; but turning men away from the path of Allah and denying Him, and [turning them away from] the Inviolable House of Worship and expelling its people therefrom is yet more awesome in the sight of Allah, since the fitnah [of afflicting the Muslim in his religion] is more awesome than killing.*¹ (Surah al-Baqarah: 217) The meaning of the verse is that had fighting been so grave in the sacred months, then what you have committed (referring to Quraysh's actions) is graver as you have ejected the Muslims from their own sacred land of Makkah, and the gravest action was your own disbelief, blocking Allah's way and tormenting the believers in their religion. This is the method of the Qur'ān in arguing with opponents. Yet some mutilate the plain texts so that it might sound pleasing to non-Muslims, and for us to be viewed in a polite, gentle and meek light! Glory be to Allah, how great a prevarication this is!


I

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ

Types of thinking

AMONG THE QUR'ĀN's guidance for Muslims is its correction of their ways of thought and selecting for them the appropriate means of understanding. This is done in order for them not to embark upon a way and then retreat, or build a great monument only to destroy it later themselves.

The Qur'ān had directed the thinking abilities of the Muslim towards learning and searching for what will benefit him in this life and the hereafter. Therefore, past incidents should not enslave the Muslim or hinder his progress, which will cost him a great deal of time and distracts him from his present duties and future aims. However, it is natural, and many a time crucial, to pause and take lessons from previous experiences. Furthermore, the past that a Muslim ought not to dwell in does not include the legacies of our honourable scholars from the time of the pious forefathers till today. This includes among other disciplines, the interpretation and understanding of the two revelations' texts. Some people who are evil and insidious call for the abandonment of the past in this field, that of the fundamentals and methodology and substituting it with interpreting the Qur'ān according to their fancies. All of this is outside this topic that we are writing about. Instead, we are writing about specific incidents and persons that others dwell on exclusively without concern for the real issues that benefit the Muslims today.

One might ask about the differences between 'Alī and Mu'awiyah . We answer by repeating what is reported by

some scholars, "These were past incidents we have not witnessed, and we do not emphasise the conflict between the Companions. The Qur'ān and Sunnah are present and are sufficient for us by the grace of Allah as He the Exalted in Might said: *Now those people have passed away; unto them shall be accounted what they have earned; and you will not be judged on the strength of what they did*"¹ (Surah al-Baqarah: 134)

Today some might ask: what about Sayyid Quṭb, al-Mawdūdī, Rashīd Riḍa and Ibn Bādīs. We say that those distinguished Callers and scholars have passed away to the mercy of their Lord, so let us take from their great legacy of goodness and at the same time leave their mistakes.

Similarly, when we read about the battles of previous scholars with the deviant sects, do we then imitate their characters and play the same roles? Or do we look around us to see novel and dangerous trends that are worthy of countering and which were not present during the lifetime of those scholars, such as the secularists whose deception the Muslims still suffer from. It was related in the interpretation of the verses: *Said [Pharaoh]: What of all the past generations?* "Mūsa answered: *Knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer [alone, and is laid down] in his decree, my Sustainer does not err, and neither does He forget.*"¹¹ (Surah Ṭāha: 51-2). "The saying of Mūsa عليه السلام: Knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer could be seen as an attempt by Mūsa not to linger on an issue that does not befit his status which is the Da'wah of the living, not the research into the state of the dead who departed to the world of true verdict."¹

It is truly frightening when such a retrospective mentality becomes a convenient escape from the duties of the present. Furthermore, the blind insistence on some old views or some past persons shows a type of the siege-mentality that takes refuge in the past instead of facing up to the

present challenges that require greater efforts and stronger wills. Our duty is to inform the Muslims of all the menaces that endanger them, and to always return them to the purity of Tawḥīd and the understanding of the distinguished centuries and blessed generations and thus formulating a methodology to treat the problems of Muslims by facing their present realities, even if this entails greater effort and places on us bigger responsibilities.

¹ Shaykh al-Ṭāhir bin ʿĀshūr. *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, vol. 8, p 234.

^I تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ

^{II} قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَى ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَ عَلِمْتُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى

The world of economy

WHEN THE MESSENGER of Allah ﷺ forged the strong fraternal bond between the Muhājirīn and the Ansār in the first stage of constructing the Islamic state, he was not only decreeing a moral and social principle but also resolving an existing economic problem. The migrants who left behind their homes and properties for the sake of Allah needed to live in decent surroundings whilst establishing an Ummah. For what would have been the outcome if they were to concentrate on seeking a livelihood to support themselves and their families instead of performing their duty of building this great monument?

This solution was a necessary prerequisite for the Muhājirīn to harmoniously integrate within this society by providing economic security such that they did not feel forsaken by their co-travellers in the Path of Īmān. Consequently the energy of Īmān and action will multiply. Since the individual is now free from the all-consuming economic toil, his level of innovation and production increases, as he is not left alone in this preparatory stage of Da‘wah.

In these agonising times during which most Muslims are suffering, the West’s economic might appears to pressurise the nations into becoming consumer states buying all that the West sells. It is then worth asking: where are the Muslims in the world of economics and economic planning? or the world of finance that should be employed to strengthen the truth, why hasn’t this field been comprehensively broken into yet? And why has failure been the outcome of a

great number of those who attempted it? And when can the Muslim become an 'economist' who knows the value of wealth which Allah the Exalted in Might describes in the Qur'ān as *khayr* (good) ?

Generally, as the Muslim does not like to be stained with a term such as miserliness or greed, he therefore avoids exercising economic sense over his affairs. Yet this is a misunderstanding of the meanings of this important theme in our lives, forgetting the state of Bayt al-Māl (Treasury) in the time of 'Umar bin al-Khatāb. In that golden period, the leader of the believers cared about every Dinar entering it, and treated the livestock of charity with his own hands in preservation of the Ummah's wealth.

The Muslim who understands the true short and long term goals of Islam has no alternative but to be economic. Indeed, it is seen how the Arab when he abandons the civilising factor of Islam returns to excessive expenditure and waste that he wrongly perceives as hospitality, and at other times in search for hypocritical praise. Truly one of the worst states the Muslims might find themselves in is their need for the donations of their enemies.

The world of economy (2)

I HAD RECEIVED a reply to the last article regarding the Muslim's relationship with the world of economy that requested more detailed examples. In reply, and instead of writing about the importance of macro economic planning, I will instead give basic examples that most of us had come across concerning the individual Muslim himself.

Firstly, it is observed that the Muslim youth is devoid of skills that may benefit him in his daily life in order to maintain his house, clothes or vehicle akin to the tradition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who repaired his own shoes and patched his clothes. Moreover, Allah Exalted is He, had favoured Dawūd عليه السلام by teaching him *How to make garments*.¹ (Surah al-Anbiyyā': 80) Today, it is observable how the modern European house is rarely without some DIY and garden tools.

Secondly, one can see how the issue of investment that benefits the Muslim individual and society is neglected. This investment takes place when the wealth is first gathered and then put in the economic production cycle consisting of agriculture, industry and trade. This collection of funds might come from regular individual savings even if they were small quantities. The production cycle will help reduce unemployment that results in so many woes that only Allah knows their extent. Naturally, the Muslim youth who is able and active yet finds himself a burden on his friends and relatives due to the scarcity of opportunities will be effected both psychologically and more dangerously, in his way of thinking.

Following on from the last issue, it is apparent that much of the investments are ploughed into consumer products. These consist of importation of manufactured goods or acting as agents or middlemen. This is done in search of quick profit, thus avoiding long-term manufacturing and agricultural projects that provides opportunities and infrastructure to a greater number of Muslims.

A fourth observation is regarding the observant Muslim man and his wife. It is seen how this man sees his wife excessively spending on accessories and luxuries for the home and attire, but does not object to such practice. It might not occur to him that this issue is extremely important and is worth worrying about. How different is this practice from that of our honourable ladies prior to the age of consumerism, when the Muslim woman used to be able to command and manage her home appropriately without overspending or over-saving, and thereby educating a generation towards acting in a similar way.

These were brief examples, and this issue requires more research and frankness as I find myself not fully expressing the duties of the 'economist' Muslim.

^I صِنْعَةُ بُؤْسٍ لَكُمْ

What a religion, if only it had strong men

WHEN I HEAR of the gradual successes of the European countries in establishing a common market, approximating politics and social laws and bringing down barriers of movement and trade, a sense of sorrow overwhelms me. How can this group of people collaborate amongst themselves whilst possessing different cultures and customs, speaking different languages and carrying prejudices resulting from centuries of violent conflicts? At the same time Muslims, and the Callers in particular, do not join together, especially as they have all the elements necessary to establish co-operation, assistance and unity.

Undoubtedly, what had triggered such moves by the Europeans is their long term views and assessments of the enormous benefits and future gains as a result of such a union. Their assessment is dispassionate and materialistic, based upon an rational deduction. Similarly, what is preventing Muslims from attempting such steps along the path of understanding and co-operation is the short-sightedness and inability to recognise the implication of the abandonment of such valuable action. There is also the simplified view that fails to see the dangers that surround it and the evil plots produced by its enemies. Occasionally, sentiments and narrow views colour judgement favouring, thereby, their own individual and partisan interests. What those Muslim do not lack is the enthusiasm for the religion but it is the cultural backwardness that render them unable to calmly and equitably assess a situation. How else can one explain the fact

that this affliction and the dire situation in which we are living through has not served to encourage co-operative work? Many westerners are astonished to find out that the Arab peoples speak a single language, each understanding the other yet at the same time a great amount of division and conflict still presides as if every region is a separate country and every country a continent! Westerners often ask whether the Egyptian person can comprehend the Moroccan and whether the Yemeni can converse with the Iraqi. It is beyond them to comprehend the existence of so many regions speaking one language with nothing but division and animosity.

How can it be that the enemies of Islam gather regularly, whilst we practice our favourite hobby of creating divisions, multiplying thereby the number of titles and banners? How is it that the enemies of Islam are able to establish states on the basis of ideas and literature of men, many a time the worst of men, whilst we carry the Book of Allah with us, with its interpretation and are still divided amongst one another? It is this book that is the mighty rope of Allah and His firmest bond which does not wane, yet Muslims are still in their pitiful state.

We have a modest request to the workers in the field of Da'wah. It is to look around and contemplate, and observe how the enemies of Islam have gathered, sparing no effort and not pausing for a single moment from their plotting, planning and destabilising efforts in order to ensure dominance over the subjugated nations. Truly, seeing the truth is far better than continuing with the deception of claiming that things are as good as they could be. Also, noting the defects, their treatment even if the medicine is bitter or painful is far better than persisting in neglect and ignorance, tirelessly engaging in accusations and counter accusations amongst ourselves.